



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Memphis District

News Release

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Corps of Engineers will conduct biological assessment for ivory-billed woodpecker

MEMPHIS, Tenn., May 13, 2005 – The Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will conduct a biological assessment for the Grand Prairie Project. The project is designed to protect the Alluvial and Sparta aquifers in Eastern Arkansas. The biological assessment will determine if the project work will have any impact on the habitat of the rediscovered and extremely rare ivory-billed woodpecker.

“We are working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the biological assessment,” said Dave Reece, Chief of the Environmental Branch for the Memphis District. “A biological assessment determines if a project will impact an endangered or threatened species or their environment.”

The biological assessment also contains a literature background that includes specifics about the endangered species, as well as a description of the area of concern. Once completed, the determination of the findings is submitted to the USFWS for their review. In the meantime, the Corps will temporarily modify its Grand Prairie Project construction schedule of the project to ensure that no work is done that might negatively impact the ivory-billed woodpecker.

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The woodpecker was sighted a number of times on mitigation land that was managed for more than two decades by the Corps of Engineers. Ownership and control of this land was turned over to the USFWS several years ago. The Corps also currently owns 1,870 acres of mitigation land in the vicinity of the sightings, land that is licensed to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for management.

As with all Corps projects, any future work in the region where the woodpecker was rediscovered will also be closely coordinated with environmental resources agencies.